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RUEHFK/AMCONSUL FUKUOKA IMMEDIATE 1958
RUEHNH/AMCONSUL NAHA IMMEDIATE 4378
RUEHOK/AMCONSUL OSAKA KOBE IMMEDIATE 5542
RUEHKSO/AMCONSUL SAPPORO IMMEDIATE 2757
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC IMMEDIATE
RUEHIN/AIT TAIPEI IMMEDIATE 6495
RUALSFJ/COMUSJAPAN YOKOTA AB JA IMMEDIATE
RHMFISS/DISA WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 TOKYO 003128

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [JA](#)

SUBJECT: LDP HISTORY GROUP REACTS TO HONDA RESOLUTION

REF: A. TOKYO 1839

[1](#)B. TOKYO 1471

[1](#)C. TOKYO 1215

[1](#)D. TOKYO 1022

[1](#)E. TOKYO 0879

Classified By: AMBASSADOR J. THOMAS SCHIEFFER, REASONS 1.4(B),(D).

[1](#)1. (C) Summary. The pendulum may be swinging back toward more assertive action by a group of conservative LDP lawmakers concerned with the comfort women issue, after passage of the Honda Resolution in committee on June 25, according to LDP League to Consider Japan's Future and Historical Education Subcommittee Chair Yasuhide Nakayama. Nakayama told the Embassy on June 28 and 29 that his fellow members were upset by prospects for passage of the resolution by the full House, and ready to resume efforts to reopen archived historical records related to the comfort women issue. They are also interested in reaching out directly to U.S. congressional leaders. The LDP group has taken notice of the recent activities of a suprapartisan group of Japanese lawmakers and other private citizens to lobby against the resolution, but is unwilling to work outside of the LDP at this point. Relations between some members of the group and Prime Minister Abe have grown strained, but they believe that Abe continues to support their work. End Summary.

[1](#)2. (C) Lower House member Yasuhide Nakayama, Chair of the comfort women subcommittee of the ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) League to Consider Japan's Future and Historical Education, discussed passage of the Honda Resolution by the House Foreign Affairs Committee (HFAC) with Embassy Political Minister Counselor on June 28 and 29. Initially, he said, the LDP league was not planning to react publicly to the June 25 passage of the Honda Resolution in committee. That changed, however, after a suprapartisan group of approximately 50 ruling LDP, opposition Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ), and independent Diet members led by former Minister of Economy and Trade Takeo Hiranuma issued a statement criticizing the resolution on June 27. Hiranuma's group consists mainly of members of the conservative Japan Conference ("Nihon Kaigi"), many of whom sponsored the recent advertisement in the U.S. press criticizing the resolution. Many members of the LDP group also belong to Nihon Kaigi.

[1](#)3. (C) In response to Hiranuma's statement, Nakayama's group

held a 90-minute general meeting at LDP Headquarters on June 129. Nariaki Nakayama (no relation), Chair of the LDP league, proposed utilizing some sort of parliamentary mechanism to convey the group's unhappiness over passage of the resolution to Speaker Pelosi and Chairman Lantos. When that idea met with resistance, he suggested the group join forces with other concerned groups in Japan to issue a non-partisan statement. He also raised the possibility that the comfort women issue could be used in the Upper House election campaign to appeal to anti-U.S. sentiment. Many of the group's members expressed anger over the Honda Resolution's use of the phrase "horrible crime" to describe Japan's treatment of the comfort women. Some urged the LDP group to raise the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, if the resolution passes. Yasuhide Nakayama said he had warned the group that Prime Minister Abe wanted to keep any reinvestigation into the comfort women issue within the LDP, and not involve the government or other groups.

14. (C) In the event the resolution passes, Nakayama predicted, the LDP group will almost certainly reopen an investigation into the comfort women issue, with the eventual aim of rewriting the 1993 Kono Declaration. He had no doubt the media would try to make the story more "interesting" than necessary, aided by conservative organizations like Nihon Kaigi, the Japan Shinto Shrine Association, and the Yasukuni Shrine.

15. (C) Yasuhide Nakayama said he had hoped to convince other young League members to respond calmly for the sake of U.S.-Japan relations, but was finding it difficult to fend off pressure from Nariaki Nakayama and League Secretary General Kyoko Nishikawa. The elder Nakayama had accepted his recommendation to hold off sending a delegation to the United

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States prior to Prime Minister Abe's visit to Washington in late April, but would not hold back if the resolution passes the full House. The younger Nakayama said he had already asked senior LDP leaders Nobutake Machimura and former Prime Minister Mori to rein in Nariaki Nakayama. He admitted to sharing his colleagues' feelings against the resolution, however, saying they were tired of being criticized for Japan's treatment of the comfort women, despite the fact that Prime Minister Abe and his predecessors had expressed their apologies, sent letters to former comfort women, and helped to establish the Asian Women's Fund.

16. (C) Relations between the LDP group and Prime Minister Abe, a founding member back in 1997, have grown strained recently, Nakayama noted. The distrust started with Special Advisor to the Prime Minister Hiroshige Seko's visit to the U.S. in February to "brief" American government officials and media on the comfort women issue. Prior to the trip, Nakayama and MOFA officials advised Seko to cancel the trip to avoid stirring up the issue. Seko, wanting to make himself a "hero," went anyway, and returned with nothing but negative reaction from U.S. officials and the media. The distrust was further deepened by Abe's contradictory instructions. When Chief Cabinet Secretary Shiozaki told Nakayama to hold off on a proposal to revise the Kono Statement, Abe instructed the group to proceed. When Nariaki Nakayama presented the proposal to Abe as instructed, Abe criticized the group as "revisionist."

17. (C) Yasuhide Nakayama recounted his June 27 meeting with Lower House Speaker Yohei Kono, author of the 1993 "apology" bearing his name. He said the two shared concerns over Japanese reaction, should the Honda Resolution pass. Nakayama told Kono that he would probably have to travel to the United States with a delegation from the LDP league, but offered to deliver private letters from Kono to key pro-Japan members in the U.S. Congress. He said Kono had accepted his offer.

18. (C) In a related development, a second subcommittee, led

by second-term Lower House member Toru Toida, is proceeding with efforts to "reexamine the facts" surrounding the Nanjing Massacre, according to Nakayama. He described Toida as more moderate than he had originally thought (ref E), although the same could not be said for some of the other subcommittee members.

SCHIEFFER